

The Regulatory & Environmental Affairs Division

(READ) regulates agriculture-oriented industries such as feed, fertilizer, lime, seed, etc., and functions as a consumer protection/consumer service organization by enforcing appropriate agricultural laws, rules and regulations to protect the public food supply. Comprised of regulatory officers (field inspectors), laboratory analysts, product registration specialists and compliance personnel, the Division's trained staff helps guarantee that consumers receive quality agricultural products.

Laboratory Services . . .

The **Agricultural Materials Laboratory** provides analyses of animal feed, fertilizer and lime samples collected from manufacturing plants and distributors throughout West Virginia by the Regulatory Officers of Field Services. Particular emphasis is placed on confirmation of label claims regarding percentage of ingredients.

The **Microbiology Laboratory** provides a limited array of bacteriological analyses for the Meat and Poultry Inspection Division (MPID) and the commercial meat industry. One service offered by this laboratory to the public sector provides testing of carcasses for *E. coli* biotype.

In cooperation with field staff, product registration and compliance personnel, the **Dairy Laboratory** participates in a program which:

- a. Issues permits to manufacturers, distributors and retail outlets.
- b. Inspects and samples products at manufacturing, distributing and retail facilities.
- c. Analyzes products for bacteria and butterfat to assure compliance with regulatory limits.

Working cooperatively with the field staff and product registration personnel, the **Seed Identification, Analyses and Certification Laboratory**:

- a. Registers certified seedsmen.
- b. Certifies varieties of seed through field inspection and laboratory testing for germination and genetic purity.
- c. Receives samples of agricultural, vegetable and lawn seeds collected at wholesale and retail outlets and analyzes them for truthful labeling.
- d. Tests seeds for farmers and seedsmen for labeling purpose.

Samples collected for the **Meat Laboratory** comprise a full range of products from ground meats to processed meats and are provided by the Meat and Poultry Inspection Division and the

Field Services Section of the Regulatory & Environmental Affairs Division. To help assure the quality of analytical tests and resulting data, the program routinely involves analyses of selected meat products for protein, fat, added water, total water, salt, nitrites and phosphates.

The **Pesticide Residue Laboratory** analyzes environmental samples to provide evidence for investigations of any alleged problems resulting from applications of pesticides and herbicides. The staff also analyzes food products for pesticide residues to insure that the consumer is not exposed to harmful levels of these toxic materials.

The **Moorefield Agricultural Center** contains laboratories designed to increase services to the Eastern Panhandle, especially in water quality testing. The expanded facility has permitted the creation of four separate laboratories specializing in nutrient management (litter/manure), water quality, dairy and microbiological testing.

Field Technicians collect samples in the seven Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) streams of the Potomac River. The present water tests include fecal coliforms, temperature, pH, conductivity, nitrate and total phosphate. Ten percent of all samples are sent to the WVU – National Research Center for Coal Energy for quality control checks.

The WVDA has in place a comprehensive program to document the bacteria levels and identify the sources. A major part of the source identification process is the use of a DNA fingerprint for *E. coli* bacteria emitted from human, wildlife and agricultural sources.